

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RICHARDSON. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. PASTOR. I represent the urban areas of Arizona, Phoenix, Tucson, and these areas are surrounded by Indian reservations, and because the economic opportunities on many of these reservations are very poor, lack of jobs, lack of opportunities, many of my native American constituents move into the urban areas. I have to tell my colleagues that they are people who do not have the highest education, do not have the talents to get the best-paying jobs, and so they tend to live in areas, in school districts, that do not have the highest resources, and that translates into that many of these young native Americans who are in our elementary schools or secondary schools have special needs, have special problems which the public school needs to address, and these moneys which service native Americans who are living in urban areas are much needed.

If there is one thing we need to do as adults, that is to ensure that our children are well educated, and these native Americans need these programs, need these resources, and I would think that all of us would want to ensure that the native Americans of this country would have the opportunities to better themselves.

So I would ask all of my colleagues to support the Obey amendment because it brings hope, it brings opportunities, to native Americans who want to better themselves, and they live in the urban areas.

□ 1545

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RICHARDSON. I yield to the gentleman from South Dakota.

(Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I rise in strong support of the Obey amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. RICHARDSON] has expired.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. RICHARDSON was allowed to proceed for 1 additional minute.)

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from South Dakota [Mr. JOHNSON].

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Chairman, in an entire State, the State of South Dakota, nine Indian reservations, it has become apparent to me the one successful strategy to combat poverty and break away from dependence of the Federal Government, in fact has been quality education. Eliminating the Office of Indian Education would have a profound negative impact in my State of South Dakota. We would lose over \$2.6 million in formula and discretionary funds, 49 South Dakota school districts would be nega-

tively impacted, and 17,800 native American children would lose educational opportunities. This is the one area where we should not be retreating.

Mr. Chairman, I again express my strong support for the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment before us proposed by the Representative from Wisconsin to restore funding for the Department of Education's Office of Indian Education, which has been targeted for elimination. Since 1972, the invaluable programs administered through the Office of Indian Education have helped over 1,200 school districts nationwide address the unique academic needs of millions of American Indian and Alaska Native children and adults. Mr. Chairman, 56 percent of the American Indian population in this country is age 24 or younger. Consequently, the need for improved educational programs and facilities, and for training the American Indian work force is pressing. I wish to use the remainder of my time to urge our continued bipartisan commitment to the Education Department's Office of Indian Education, and the hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged young people served annually by this Office.

American Indians have been, and continue to be, disproportionately affected by both poverty and low educational achievement. In 1990, over 36 percent of American Indian children ages 5–17 were living below the poverty level. The high school completion rate for Indian people aged 20 to 24 was 12.5 percent below the national average. American Indian students, on average, have scored far lower on the National Assessment for Education Progress indicators than all other students. In 1994, the combined average score for Indian students on the scholastic achievement test was 65 points lower than the average for all students. These statistics reflect the continued neglect of America's under-served Indian population and are unacceptable.

By eliminating the Office of Indian Education, there is little hope of breaking the cycle of low educational achievement, and the unemployment and poverty that result from neglected academic potential. This Office, unlike any other, provides educational services that directly address the unique learning needs and styles of Indian students, with sensitivity to Native cultures, ultimately promoting higher academic achievement. Eliminating the Office would have a particularly profound impact on Indian education in my State of South Dakota. More than \$2.6 million in formula and discretionary funds assisted American Indian children and adults in South Dakota in fiscal year 1994. Grants were made directly to 49 South Dakota school districts. The education of almost 17,000 of our American Indian children in South Dakota would be significantly affected if the programs administered by the Office were eliminated. In addition, if funding were no longer available, every South Dakota school currently receiving a grant would have to release at least one staff person, resulting in almost 200 teachers and aides no longer working in Indian education in the State. This past year, almost \$300,000 went to tribal schools to support innovative approaches to Indian education and more than \$350,000 supported student fellows in teacher training programs in colleges throughout our State. The loss of these discretionary programs will not only adversely affect potential recipients of teacher

training and professional development, but will virtually cut off those tribal communities which benefit from students returning to education professions on reservations.

In terms of local empowerment, Native Americans remain at a distinct disadvantage. While the growth rate of native populations is accelerating rapidly, the nearly 2 million American Indians living in the United States in 1990 represented an increase of 39 percent over the 1980 total, American Indians and Alaska Natives still comprise less than 1 percent of the total U.S. population. With more than 500 American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages, the population is also highly diverse in terms of culture and need. Small in numbers, isolated and diverse, this is a population that clearly needs and deserves our special attention.

There are strong historical and moral reasons for continued support of this program. In keeping with our special trust responsibility to sovereign Indian nations, we need to promote the self-determination and self-sufficiency of Indian communities. Education is absolutely vital to this effort. The elimination of the Office of Indian Education would violate the Government's commitment and responsibility to Indian nations and only slow the progress of self-sufficiency.

This question of eliminating the Indian education programs is not just about dollars and programs for a population in need. It is also about helping communities and cultures to survive.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, let us invest in people and children. R&D for fossil energy can be done by the private sector, but let us not stop this investment in kids, in programs, and education. I urge support for the Obey-Richardson-Clayton amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to respond to charges that our amendment restores unnecessary bureaucracy. Only \$3.8 million of last years \$83 million appropriated for title IX funding was spent on the Office of Indian Education and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

What Mr. COBURN's amendment, should it be offered, does not do is provide funding for special programs for Indian children and programs for Indian adult education. This is wrong.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally in order to receive a message.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN) assumed the chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will receive a message.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.